

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04366 011244Z
ACTION SS-25

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Z O 011155Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV FLASH
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 4366

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MILI, LE, IS, SY
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: ABSENCE OF SYRIANS

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 9731, (B) JERUSALEM 2083

1. ON RECEIPT REFTELS CALLED G-2 MAJOR ABDO. HE CATEGORICALLY DENIES THERE ARE ANY SYRIANS, OFFICERS OR ENLISTED MEN, WITH LEBANESE UNIT AT KAWKABA. HE NOTED THAT UNIFIL OFFICIAL PRESENT AT MEETING THIS MORNING COULD CONFIRM THIS.

2. ABDO SAID THERE WAS NO RPT NO SYRIAN COMPANY WHICH ACCOMPANIED LEBANESE SOUTH. THE SINGLE TRUCK WHICH HAD BEEN MENTIONED TO ME BY CAPT. CHAABAN HAD STOPPED AT KFAR MISHKI RPT KFAR MISHKI. IT HAD NOT GONE SOUTH OF THAT POINT, WHICH SYRIANS CONSIDERED THE RED LINE.

3. I ASKED ABOUT THE SYRIAN ARTILLERY BATTERY ALLEGEDLY
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MOVING SOUTH FROM KFAR MISHKI. ABDO SAID ABSOLUTELY THERE WAS NO RPT NO SUCH UNIT.

4. COMMENT: ISRAELIS MAY BE INDULGING IN DELIBERATE CAMPAIGN OF MISINFORMATION OR PERHAPS THEY HAVE GONE ORIENTAL. IN ANY EVENT, WE DO NOT THINK THERE IS ANY SUBSTANCE TO THESE REPEATED AND TENDENTIOUS ALLEGATIONS. END COMMENT.

5. FEW MINUTES BEFORE CONVERSATION REPORTED ABOVE ABDO HAD CALLED ME TO SAY THAT COL. ADIB SAAD, COMMANDER OF LEBANESE COLUMN, WAS AT HIS SIDE, HAVING JUST RETURNED FROM NAQURA. SAAD REPORTED THEIR POSITIONS HAD BEEN SHELLED THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT BY 155 AND 175 MM CANNON. I ASKED IT HADDAD'S FORCES HAD SUCH WEAPONS AND ABDO SAID HADDAD HIMSELF HAD NOTHING, BUT ISRAELIS WERE OPERATING OR DIRECTING FIRE FROM SUCH WEAPONS IN MARJAYOUN AREA.

6. ABDO SAID SAAD HAD MET BRIEFLY WITH HADDAD YESTERDAY AND TODAY, BUT UBIQUITOUS MIZRACHI WAS THERE AND HADDAD UNABLE SPEAK FREELY. HADDAD HAD REPEATED MESSAGE WE HAD RECEIVED FROM WEIZMAN (THE SIX POINTS) AND ADDED THAT NO HEAVY ARMAMENTS COULD BE PERMITTED TO PASS ALONG ROAD. HE SAID IT NOT CLEAR WHAT HADDAD MEANT BY THAT TERM. THERE HAD BEEN NO MENTION OF THE ALLEGED SYRIANS. (I GATHER MEETING ALSO ATTENDED BY UNIFIL REPS WHO MAY HAVE MORE TO SAY.)

7. ABDO SAID TOTAL STRENGTH OF LEBANESE FORCE WAS 650 MEN.

8. I ASKED HIM WHAT HE THOUGHT OF PROPOSAL TO SEND COLUMN FORWARD BY SMALL UNITS. ABDO SAID HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT MADE SENSE. IT COULD BE BROKEN DOWN INTO FIVE COMPANIES WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.

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9. I ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING HADDAD IN PLACE FOR TIME BEING. HE SAID HE THOUGHT PERHAPS THEY COULD LIVE WITH STATUS QUO FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS, BUT THAT WAS HIS PERSONAL VIEW. HE DID NOT KNOW HOW PRESIDENT AND BOUTROS FELT.

10. BOUTROS ALSO CALLED ME TO SAY HE AND PRESIDENT WOULD WANT TO SEE ME AT PALACE TOMORROW AT 1030. HE SAID THEY WERE STUDYING PAPER I HAD SENT THEM REPORTING WEIZMAN'S POSITION. HE ASKED ABOUT THE PHRASE "WITH FLAGS FLYING" IN PARA 3 OF TEL AVIV 9718. WHAT DID THAT MEAN? I SAID I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST AN OFFHAND EXPRESSION. HE SAID IF IT MEANT BOTH UN AND LEBANESE FLAGS THAT WAS ALL RIGHT, BUT LEBANESE WOULD NOT WANT TO GO JUST UNDER UN FLAG. THEY WOULD WANT TO FLY THEIR OWN TOO. I SAID THAT SHOULD NOT BE PROBLEM.

11. ABDO LATER CALLED TO SAY HE WAS SENDING ME A COPY OF MESSAGE FROM HADDAD SAYING LEBANESE ARMY WELCOME IN SOUTH. TEXT NOW RECEIVED AND WILL FORWARD ASAP.

12. SUGGESTION: WHAT ABOUT HAVING SAM LEWIS OR DICK VIETS

INTERVIEW HADDAD WITHOUT ISRAELIS PRESENT.

PARKER

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NNN

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